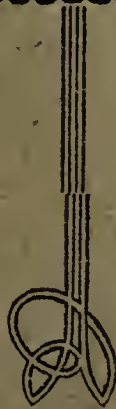


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COMMUNISM.

BY EMILE VALLET.

HISTORY OF THE EXPERIMENT AT
NAUVOO OF THE ICARIAN
SETTLEMENT.



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COMMUNISM

BY EMILE VALLET

HISTORY OF THE EXPERIMENT AT NAUVOO OF THE ICARIAN SETTLEMENT

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The science of sciology occupies many minds. Governments are every day more and more embarrassed. The social question, like a nightmare, disturbs the sleep of our rulers. They see, they feel something growing, the clogging of the economical system. They fear some disturbances, some explosions. Strikes are becoming more frequent. All the isms ring in their ears. Socialism, collectivism, communism, anarchism, etc. The people criticise the present organization; they conceive and propose new theories; some of them are boisterous, show dispositions to use violent means. We read in the papers of armed organizations of communists in some cities. As we have some people and perhaps there are some among your readers who are disposed to favor the communistic system. For their benefit and edification I will give a condensed historical sketch of the Icarian community, established at

Nauvoo. Show the demoralizing influence of communism on men and its inadaptability to human nature.

Etienne Cabet was born at Dijon, France, and was the son of a cooper. He received a good education, studied law and became notorious. His great clearness and force of argumentation made him an eminent orator. He occupied many prominent offices; attorney general in Corsica, member of the chamber of deputies and other positions. He had studied Plato, Morse, Babcuiff, Fourier and Christ. He wrote a work entitled "True Christianity," where he demonstrated that Christ was a communist and based his Utopia, or new system of organization on Christ's moral teaching.

Having a warm heart, lamenting over the poor condition of the laboring class, seeing no hope of amelioration in the present system of organization, believing in the practicability of communism, he resolved

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to give a form to his idea and wrote a book named "Voyage en Icarie." As a theoretical work it is a marvel. It is perfectly splendid. It shows a nation under the communistic organization. The people happy. No poor, no rich. Every one enjoying the luxury and comfort of life, every one imbued with the consciousness of duty, striving to do better than the rest, giving good examples, no saloons, no churches, no houses of prostitution, no gambling, no murders, no thieves, no speculators, no capitalists, no millionaires.

It just filled the aspirations of those who wanted radical reform.

Cabet, though fighting the established order of things, was a law abiding citizen. Was opposed to bloody revolutions. He always advised his followers not to take part in any secret societies, but to abide laws and give in all and every respect an example of morality and good behavior. He could talk the language of the people and acquired a strong influence and reverence. Many called him "Father" and a second Christ. He published a paper "Le Populaire," and it was thru this organ he communicated with

his adepts all over France. As soon as he was satisfied his theory was well understood, he resolved to wait no longer to put it into practice; asked the French government the privilege to try the experiment in France. The government most respectfully declined, being afraid of contagion. He then proposed to emigrate to the United States where freedom reigned supreme. He succeeded in obtaining from a company a land grant of several thousand acres in Texas. He made an appeal for some volunteers to form the advance guard and in February, 1848, sixty-nine men met with him in Paris willing to leave their families in France to go to a mostly wild country to establish the new colony and prepare the way to the thousands who were ready to follow. Cabet presided at the meeting and set them in knowledge of the hard task they were undertaking. He explained to them that in order to make a success of communism they had to renounce individualism, egoism, make complete abnegation of their own selves and submit to the dictation of the majority.

They all solemnly swore that they

were willing to submit to these conditions, to stand all sorts of privations and sufferings to establish a new society that would indubitably make their own happiness and also that of the whole mankind. They elected E. Cabet dictator of said society for ten years. One among them having gained Cabet's confidence was proposed by him and accepted as director of the young colony in the absence of Cabet.

The enthusiasm was great when they embarked at the city of Le Havre. The Pioneers of Humanity (as they called themselves) looked splendid in their black velvet suits. Thousands of friends and co-partisans accompanied them to the sailing vessel. The air resounded with wishes of success, songs of hope and love. The press of the country had to admit that the demonstration was imposing but calm.

Those sixty-nine men, selected among the best laboring element, the choice of the worthy, moral and industrious, reached their destination—Texas. From Shreveport on the Red river, they had to travel overland a few hundred miles. The streams were swollen, the roads

muddy, but they were young and courageous and it was only fun to them. When on the place they began to build houses and till the soil. The weather was beautiful, the sun mild, the air filled with the melodious voices of birds; the herds of wild horses coming near their settlement at the bugle sound, the luxurious vegetation of a most tropical climate, the good quality of the new cultivated soil, made them believe they had found the garden of Eden. In the month of June the sun of Texas and the miasmas of the new soil began to exert their influence on the courageous toilers. The malaria made its appearance; twenty-five or thirty were affected with the malignant fever and in a short time nine of them died. They had not received any news yet from their mother country, but had discovered that their director "Gouhenant," in whom Cabet and themselves had placed their confidence was a Jesuit, a traitor. (They shaved his head and chased him ignominiously away.) They became discouraged. One morning they received the news that a revolution had taken place in France and the republic proclaimed.

They hesitated a few days what to do, but the insalubrity of the climate and the hope of a better government in France contributed to their decision to abandon the enterprise. Carrying their sick, they retrograded to Shreveport, where they met a second advance guard composed of twenty-eight members. They consulted and decided to go to New Orleans. When they arrived there they met a third departure composed of ninety members—men, women and children. They were without a leader. Not knowing what to do they wrote to Cabet for advice. Cabet hesitated for a moment whether he should order them back, or go and join them. His best friends advised him to stay; that he could do more for the cause in France than in the United States. But he was too deeply engaged already and he thought best to start for New Orleans, where he met the disheartened communists.

The presence of the head, the father, gave them courage. They remained there over winter, it being not the proper time of year to go north. As they renounced Texas as too unhealthy, early in the spring

of 1849 they sent a commission to explore the Mississippi. The commission, composed of three members arriving at Nauvoo, found the place just evacuated by the Mormons, vacant houses, land in cultivation; they thought the place well adapted and returned quickly to New Orleans, when it was decided to try the experiment at Nauvoo. The cholera had made its appearance and several of them died from it. They lost a few while on the river and after they reached Nauvoo the disease continued to exert its deadly influence. They buried their dead at night all over town, not to awaken the suspicion of the inhabitants, but nevertheless their enthusiasm was strong, and though they had suffered considerably physically, the moral, the spiritual, was all right. They were young, willing to suffer—even willing to die—for the cause, and confident in themselves and the principles, they began (under the leadership of the father, the second Christ) the establishment of Paradise on earth.

For the benefit of your readers who are not aware of what Icarian communism means, before going

any further I will have to explain.

Icarius is famous for having manufactured a pair of wings composed of beeswax; adapted these wings to his body and attempted the ascension to Heaven. As he ascended towards the sun, the heat became so intense that the wings melted and Icarius fell flat on the earth, realizing that he was too pretentious and better remain on this planet. (This is about what the Icarian communists have done as the experiment will show.) For what reason Cabet selected that name I do not know.

The new society was based on marriage and the family. The principle of free love was not admitted by the Icarians. To the exception of the family, everything was in common among them. No private property, no monies, no poor, no rich, no competition, no antagonism; complete solidarity. The strong working for the feeble, the sick; the one working for all and all working for one; everyone producing according to his strength, his talent, his skill and consuming according to his wants. No lawyers, but arbitrators. The schools open

to all children equally, universal suffrage for men above twenty years of age, women having the deliberative right and as soon as enough enlightened, the consultative right. The people having its full and complete sovereignty; making its own laws and willing to submit to the dictation of the majority. Women rehabilitated, cherished and respected. Love, confidence, security, happiness.

Our pioneers were not rich, but they inhaled the pure air of freedom. Uncle Sam left them perfectly free to try their experiment. I doubt if the president of the United States at that time ever noticed their presence on this continent. Their neighbors were friendly, well disposed to favor them. They treated them as the countrymen of Lafayette. They had nothing to struggle against, but human nature; their own nature. They had the will power, the skill as mechanics, a new and rich country and complete freedom.

Their first move was to organize their government. They had in France elected E. Cabet dictator for the term of ten years. On the remark from some American citizens

it was contrary to the institutions of the country, they concluded to have a president for the term of one year. Cabet was elected unanimously. The ministorium was composed of four directors, one of finance, one of industry and agriculture, one of nourishment and clothing and one of public instruction. They established a branch in St. Louis, Mo., as a means of exportation for their products, (industrial products). A large proportion of the members were tailors or shoemakers by trade. Being in need of money, they had fifteen to twenty members manufacturing clothing and shoes which they sold in St. Louis. They also purchased a flour mill and distillery and began the manufacturing of flour and whisky.

They were offered land, farms at very low figures, but Cabet had examined the ruins of the Mormon Temple, that could be seen at ten miles distance. They had not money enough to buy both, land and the ruins, but those ruins worked on Cabet's brains. They were renowned already and when connected with his name, they both would add to each other's glory. A

few of the members would have preferred investing the money in land. They thought that it was not practical, not wise to think of glory, of monuments when they had no certainty of having bread for their families, but the prestige, the respect, confidence in the father was so great that those thoughts remained buried in their bosoms. No one dared to utter a word in opposition to Cabet, and his will prevailed. They bought the ruins for the sum of one thousand dollars, of which they paid five hundred, and the inhabitants of Nauvoo five hundred, contributed as a donation. They rented houses and farms. They organized their schools, a music band composed of thirty-six pieces, a choir and a theatrical club. They also had a good library. As every one, in order to be admitted, had to pay an admission fee of four hundred francs (\$80,00,) and clothing enough for four years, the clothing question was easy to manage. The food, the diet was an every day question. They could not always procure very selected nutriment. Pork and beans made their appearance quite often on the table. Many of

them had been accustomed to more delicacies, especially the women. They were willing to deprive themselves of all the comforts of life, but it lasted too long; some became tired; they made ready to leave. As they renounced all earthly rights to private property and bequeathed all they possessed to the community, they had to leave without a penny, in a strange country, not knowing the language. The inhabitants of Nauvoo gave an entertainment for their benefit to defray their expenses to St. Louis. Some worked in Nauvoo until they earned enough to enable them to travel. Their former brothers and father were implacable. Being in a precarious financial condition themselves, they refused any aid whatever. No money, not even their own tools to exercise their professions, were restituted to them. They were considered as enemies and treated as such. Cowards, traitors, felons, were the epithets thrown in their faces. They had not the qualifications of true communists. They were too selfish; too much under the influence of the old world habits.

Being not prepared to receive new

recruits, they ordered the emigration to stop. They began to decrease in number, but the enthusiasm was so great in France that a new expedition, composed of forty, reached Nauvoo in the fall of 1849. Myself and family came alone; my father and mother could not bear the idea to wait any longer to establish paradise on earth. We reached Nauvoo, Ill., on March, 17th, 1850. While in St. Louis (where we had to remain a couple of days, as the river was too full of ice and boats were not running any farther north,) we met the father and one of the secretaries trying in vain to borrow money. My father having \$500.00 was welcome. The father asked my father to remit those \$500.00 immediately. My father, though very enthusiastic, found the request very daring, having never seen Cabet before, not being on the place, yet refused to remit all, but condescended to remit half. Cabet bought the necessary articles he needed, started back to Nauvoo, paid cabin fare for him and his assistant, with our money and told us to stay and take the next boat and come on deck. Such little incidents, little nothings,

have more important consequences than they are credited with. While at sea my father made the acquaintance of a man, also on his way to Nauvoo. He had not the required amount of money to be admitted, but intended to work at New Orleans, (where he had some friends). until he realized enough money to pay his way and admission fee. The man was married. His wife not endorsing his communistic views, refused to follow him. He left her and started. My father, convinced of the good moral and physical qualifications of the man, offered to furnish him the money, and he consented to come along. When at Nauvoo we made our application for membership, so did our companion. Cabet opposed his admission on the ground that he had left his wife in France. One of the members present at the meeting remarked that E. Cabet himself was in the same condition, that he not only had left his wife, but his children. Nevertheless the man was not admitted. Cabet knew that the man had no money of his own. He did not care to have any more members, but money, and knowing that he would get

all the money my father had without admitting the man, he opposed him and urged my father to try to recover the money advanced by him to pay the fare from New Orleans to Nauvoo for that man. My father refused to do so, saying it was not a loan but a gift.

Early in spring of 1850 on Cabet's proposition, they decided to rebuild the Mormon Temple. The stone work only was standing, walls sixty feet high. The upper stories and tower were constructed of wood and had been destroyed by fire. They sent an agent north to purchase the necessary timber and in the month of June the masons began to lay the foundation to rest the columns or pilasters to support the floors. The 27th of June eleven men were at work on the interior of the building. I was one of them. At 3 o'clock p. m. a distant report of thunder announced the approach of a storm. At their request I stepped out to ascertain whether it was a severe storm or not. Seeing only an insignificant cloud, I reported no danger. We continued to work. The basement of said temple was divided into small rooms on either side.

Two of these rooms had been covered with boards. One on the north side to store green hides. The other on the south side to store tools. Suddenly a furious wind began to blow; four of the masons fearing the non-solidity of the walls, left to seek shelter elsewhere. Seven of us remained, taking refuge in the tool room on the south side. If there is a Providence it was on our side, for hardly had we taken our position than the tornado began to tear small rocks from the top of the walls and flew in every direction. We became frightened. Some proposed to run away, others opposed it on the ground that it was dangerous, as those loose rocks could fall on our heads and kill us. Before we had decided whether we should stay or run, one of us that was watching exclaimed: "Friends, we are lost, the north wall is caving in!" And so it was. A wall sixty feet high was coming on us, having only forty feet to expand. We fled to the southwest corner, deafened with terror. I for one heard nothing. The fall of that wall was heard three miles away in the country. We looked at one another. All alive, but as white

as sheets. The wind was terrific, the rain was blinding us. The cloud was touching the ground. The most severe storm I ever witnessed in Nauvoo. We were mostly paralyzed. We expected every minute the other walls to come down. Some of the top rocks had fallen within three feet of us. The east wall was three feet out of plumb. "Forward march!" shouted one and on we ran over the heaped up rocks more dead than alive. When out, it was so dark that we could not find any gates and jumped over fences. I met my father coming to the rescue, all alone. Cabet tried to prevent him but did not succeed. The storm lasted three hours. Several houses had been blown down. They had built their laundry in a creek a half mile north of town; twelve women were at work. Cabet sent a man to find out what had become of them. The man came back saying that the women were drowned and the house carried away. The water was running twelve feet high in the creek. Only the next morning did we receive the good news that the women were all safe, but had hardly time to escape through the windows. So

sudden was the rise of the water and in rain and storm ran to a farm house, a quarter of a mile away. A Swiss family had just time to leave a brick house that blew down. The loss of crops and property was great but no lives were lost.

The fall of that wall ended the rebuilding of the temple.

The agent they had sent north to buy timber for the building had been gone for several months already, and not receiving any news from him it was thought some accident happened, perhaps he'd been killed or drowned. He never came back. A love affair, and the news that the intention to rebuild the temple was abandoned had kept him from returning, but was alive. He was a well educated man and as an architect built the capitol of the state of Illinois at Springfield. And if I am well informed, that at Des Moines city, state of Iowa. His name was Piquenard.

The inhabitants of Nauvoo and surroundings having expressed their disapproval at the manner those leaving the society were treated, without any means whatever, fearing to irritate their neighbors,

they thought more prudent to allow from \$10 to \$20 per head of family. It was also decided that those who would be admitted in the future, would be entitled to recover one-half of the money brought by them and also their tools in case they would choose to leave.

The Icarians in France were pressing. Applications were received daily. Some of the faithful were writing letters to their friends and relations praising the condition of the society. Cabet tried to stop the emigration but failed. They would come without authorization and when here had to be admitted. It became urgent to erect dwelling houses and a dining hall. They adapted a circular saw to their mill and as it was supposed the islands opposite Nauvoo had no owners, they chopped trees down and converted them into timber. They erected a building 120 feet long and 40 feet wide with an aisle 30 feet long for a kitchen, a large cellar the whole size of the building. The first story was divided into a working shop for the ladies—dressmaking, ironing and mending, a stage for the theatrical performances, and

the balance, 80 feet long, a dining hall. A buffet or large stand with shelves, moving on a railway from the kitchen to the hall, loaded with victuals, plates, knives and forks, excited the admiration of the visitors. Four painters, artists, decorators, adorned the walls of the halls with inscriptions. The Icarian principles, moral precepts, could be read from one end of the hall to the other. They had up to that time used at their table the tin goblets and plates. They decided to have glasses and porcelain plates. The second story was divided into rooms 16x20 for lodging, with balcony all around the building. Each family was allowed one room with one window and one door, two chairs a table, a bed and looking glass; the children being with their parents on Sunday only and never at night; they had their dormitory in the school houses. Bachelors had one room for two, or more, according to the size of the room. They all took their repasts in common, except the nurses who were allowed a little extra and at home. They had a hospital for the sick, with an extra cook. They also had a pharmacy.

The use of whiskey was allowed for those exposed to the weather and performing hard labor, even to the women, those doing the washing. Icarians were temperate but not tetotalers. They would have preferred wine to whiskey but they could not succeed in raising the fruit, having only in cultivation the French varieties of grapes, that were not adapted to this climate.

Cabet was opposed to the use of tobacco and raised war against it. Some of the women folks used snuff and men smoked. Few had the habit of chewing. They raised their own tobacco. Cabet forgot himself while arguing against the dirty weed, not only to compare those who used it to hogs, but said that they were filthier. Many had their most tender feelings badly hurt. They thought it was not the way to make them renounce their habits, that abusive language never promoted reform. Some got stubborn and swore to themselves they would smoke anyway. The production in all the different branches of industry was small. They were running in debt rapidly. The agriculture was not remunerative. They could

not raise corn to supply their distillery, nor wheat for the flour mill. They were drawing heavily on a commercial house in St. Louis, and all the whiskey and flour they manufactured was always shipped to that house and the benefit was small. They had in the winter a squad of twenty to thirty men chopping wood on the islands for the alimentation of the mill. Men that never handled an axe before, were sent to chop wood. They had their hands blistered, chopping a half cord of wood in one day. They had as many as six men on a cross-cut saw, two holding the handles and two others on each side pulling with a rope. They had a squad of six men running a flatboat all summer to take the wood down to the mill. They sometimes carried that wood a great distance on their back, (in baskets made for that purpose,) from the interior of the islands to the boat. The Icarians did not show practicability in any of their work. Was it the want of interest or the lack of skill? Perhaps it was both. The future will demonstrate.

Communistic life is in accordance with the teachings of Christ in that

respect that it took the "care for the morrow" away. If they had performed their duty or not, they expected to find their breakfast ready every morning when the sound of the trumpet called them to the refectory. The burden rested on the directors. They had to care for the morrow and were often greatly embarrassed what to bring on the table. And though it cost only 7 cents per capita to feed and clothe the Icarians, they could not manage to produce enough. They bought their groceries, etc., at wholesale price. They raised their own vegetables. They manufactured their flour and whisky, raised tobacco, bought beeves and hogs on foot. Had all the advantage of corporation in buying, but the production was lacking.

Besides their own production, the money paid as admission fees, many had a surplus, some hundreds, to thousands of francs and they received from the mother country, a fund called "The Icarian subscription." It consisted of money deposited by some poor devils who were not in possession of a sufficient amount to be admitted and were paying

monthly a certain sum until the full amount should be credited to them and then could join. It proved a clear loss to them.

Cabet convoked some extraordinary general assembly of all the major male members. Women and minors were not allowed to assist. There they remained mostly day and night, for several days seeking the remedy to the growing evil. They accused one another of want of devotion to the cause, to the principles, of want of respect and reverence to the father. Cabet reminded them of the beautiful letters they wrote to him in France, calling him a father, a Christ, a savior; exhorted them to have confidence in him, to work with courage, that under his leadership, success was certain. That the principles were good if they only would practice them, (if he had said, "could practice them," he would have been nearer the truth.)

The majority of the members were on his side and the respect for Cabet, the prestige of his past career was so great that those who could detect the evil influence of the principle on the human nature, did

not dare to open their mouth and sanctioned by their silence the idea that the principles were not to blame, but men. Among themselves in private they could talk, but in presence of the father, they were mute, speechless. A man, a little one too, a wooden shoemaker by trade, had at one of these meetings the courage to make a few remarks on the principles and also on the father. He was of small stature but was every inch a man and expressed his honest opinion. It was too much for Cabet, who had been adulated and flattered. He looked at the man a few minutes, hardly believing the report of his audible organ. And forgetting all courtesies, all respect, all principles, answered: Is it possible that you, you Janyrey (it was the name of the little man,) you a little boy (the man was thirty-five years of age,) allow yourself to make opposition to me, Cabet. Was that not a splendid way of argumentation? I was only seventeen years of age then, a mere boy, too bashful to open my mouth in public. But I turned around to see if not a man in the assembly would get up and take

the part of that little man, that showed so much courage. No, not one. All slaves to the powerful Cabet.

When the assembly would show some hesitation to adopt the measures proposed by him, he would get out of temper and menace them to go back to France, and leave them to their fate. He had his secret police and tried to have the members tell on one another. He met very often some straight and loyal natures that were shocked at the idea to act as spies. Many began to inwardly lose their respect for him.

The different shops or corps of laborers were under the direction of a foreman, elected by the very shop or corps itself, sometimes unanimously, sometimes not. Those directors would make remarks especially to those that voted against them. For the smallest infringement, transgression, tardiness, or use of vulgar language, they would be noticed in their reports. Those reports were read to the general assembly as a moral incentive to good behavior and dutiful conduct, and and at the same time as a restric-

tive pressure of public opinion—the only mode of punishment they had for small deviation to the principles. Those men would generally feel grieved about it and their human nature would influence them to not forget nor forgive. The directors had to see that the work should be well done. They had their ways, customs of working. It was their duty and right to make remarks. Some of the directors as well as laborers were quick tempered or had a poor way to express themselves. Words were exchanged and the fist was sometimes used as a way of argumentation.

The majority of the members composing the Icarian Society was a selection from the best laboring class of France. The most laborious, honest, economical, intelligent and philanthropic. They had the profound conviction that they were able to carry out the communist principles. They had the determination, the will (they thought) that would overcome all obstacles, all difficulties and enable them to stand and support all privations. Cabet, on his side, was determined to sacrifice his career, his family,

happiness, even his life, out of love for the laboring class and to show the practicability of communism. They and he were in earnest. But they were human. The ego was too strong to be subdued by the will. They were under the influence of their sensations and without being conscious of it were constantly blaming others and hurting the feelings of those they called brothers. They saw the straw in others eyes and did not see the beam in their own. As they had the same rights, the same duties, the same privileges, they naturally thought themselves authorized, entitled to watch, to detect, to mention the negligence, the errors, the lack of skill, the want of economy, the wasting and squandering, the abuse of authority of some of the officers; in one word all that could injure the interest and endanger the existence of the society.

The Icarians having abolished all moneys, had no medium to buy with. When they needed clothing, they had to submit their requests to a commission instituted to that effect. The proceedings and deliberations of that commission would

transpire and the individual who had applied for a pair of trousers, a shirt, or anything else would have to hear that some remarks had been made on the validity of his request. That he was wearing his clothes too fast, that he was applying too often. That he could do without yet. Sometimes his request was rejected. That individual felt mortified and would observe that others had obtained some articles who did not need them as bad as he did and were not working as hard as he did. Discontentment and abatement was the result.

They exploited a coal mine in Nauvoo along the south side of Thirteenth street. A vein of coal from eight to ten inches thick covered by twelve to fourteen feet of ground and consequently not furnishing enough to supply the wants of the society. Being always too busy to provide for fuel in the right season, when the roads were good, they had to send teams to Fountain Green, thirty miles distant, in the coldest weather. When the wagons were unloaded the coals were carried away so rapidly that those who were appointed to dis-

tribute them equally among the members and whose duty it was to ascertain that every one would get some, could not prevent some from making large provisions that would keep them supplied in case it would become impossible to provide for more, without considering whether women, children or the sick had any at all. Butter was a rare article on the table. (Each table had ten occupants.) A piece of butter was brought generally for breakfast. That piece of butter was intended for ten persons. Some, consulting only their desire, their appetite, would allow themselves to take such share of it, that before the butter could reach the other end of the table it was exhausted and some had to do without. Complaints, remarks, exchange of bitter expressions. The cooks devised the expedient of having a form mould in which the butter was pressed and divided into ten equal shares, in order that each and every one should know what he was entitled to and secure the butter-right of others. Many were shocked at the humiliating and degrading measure. Men and women! of intellect—in full pos-

session of their five senses, being treated like small children. Human nature. The beast began to show itself, plainly upsetting all the beautiful dreams. Idealism. Many began to acknowledge that we (when they said we, they meant the others) were not able, not worthy of living in community. Having been raised under the influence of individualism, we could not be expected to fulfill the requirements of such mode of life. But our children who would grow up under the institution, who would know nothing of any other organization, they would be competent, up to the standard. We will see.

The men in charge of the flat boat to transfer the wood from the islands to the mill, generally landed their last load, every week, on Saturday evening. In order that the boat should be unloaded to enable them to start up on Monday morning an appeal was made on Sunday morning during breakfast, for some volunteers to unload that boat, (as it was supposed the boat men were exhausted, their labor being considered one of the hardest.) At the first call, fifty to sixty men offered

their services. The boat was unloaded in a half hour. It was merely play. Do you see the advantage of communism (was said.) When necessary union can perform an extraordinary duty with pleasure. Most every Sunday the call was repeated. The most faithful considered it a sacred duty and they responded to the call cheerfully. They soon had to notice that some who did help the first time did not come again. That some never came. That their number was decreasing every Sunday. The work that was merely fun when performed by sixty became hard labor by twenty or fifteen. Finally they, one by one, failed, and one Sunday morning when the director of industry called for volunteers, one man answered. Yes, only one. We had only one good communist.

Instead of creating a feeling of grief, every one present laughed at it. So did devotion, enthusiasm wear out in three years. Some had the conscience of abnegation. Others had not. The bad examples, the wrong predominated and no one was willing to perform any extra duty but confined himself to the ful-

fillment of the general duty.

It was'nt allowed to have anything not possessed by others. Some had jewelry, watches, pictures, guns. As the society was not rich enough to supply all the members with the like, those in possession of such articles were requested to deposit them in the hands of the directors. Some (women especially) had received those jewels from a mother, relatives or friends as a token of love or friendship. They did not like to part with those objects. Some would keep a few hens in order to have a few fresh eggs, others would cultivate a few flowers, others had been caught or suspected of cooking extras for themselves, at home. Derogation, deviation from the principles, anarchy!

It looks most ridiculous to relate these small events. But they worked slowly and surely to the destruction of the society, as they created enmity among the members. They were none others but the natural requirements of the human nature which can not be submitted to uniformity in all things. And the more it is made compulsory, the more human nature will rebel

against it, and go for the forbidden fruit.

In 1852 Cabet was summoned to appear before a criminal court in Paris to answer an accusation of fraud. He at once resolved to go and clear himself from the accusation. He was honest and his good name was dearer to him than life. Though old he crossed the ocean to confound his accusators. He cleared himself, rehabilitated his reputation, and in 1853 came back faithfully to Nauvoo, more convinced than ever that he would make a success of the experiment.

The children, the ones in whom rested our hopes for the realization of communistic life, were cautiously and rigidly trained and educated. The schools were kept in good order and perfect control under the management of male and female teachers. The latter were especially well qualified, morally and mentally. The pupils were allowed as little as possible to come in contact with the elder members of the society. The girls had their schools separate from the boys and taught by female teachers. They all were instructed to practice the Icarian

principles and the moral teachings of Christ.

Cabet himself initiated those young beings with those principles, explained and praised the result of being good, of "doing unto others as we wish to be done by." To protect, love and work for the feeble, the sick; to forgive; to hold the other cheek when smitten on the one; to be kind, one to another; to love and respect their parents and everybody in general.

They were kept clean and trained to do their own housework by turn. They took their meals in their respective school-houses.

They were allowed to see their parents only on Sundays. It was feared that too much intercourse with their parents would have a contaminating influence.

Three of the older boys were taught separately from the others in a special room, by a special teacher, having shown an uncontrollable disposition and being considered a dangerous example. The fair being who afterwards became my wife, being fourteen years of age, when, with her mother, she joined the society, was not allowed

the attendance to school (though she needed it very much,) on the pretense that she, having been raised in the old world might set a bad example to the selected ones supposed to be pure as angels.

The Icarians had no form of religion—no ceremonies. The majority were agnostics, some atheists, theists, others spiritualists. They all revered Christ as a great philosopher and philanthropist, and admired his moral teachings.

Cabet, on Sundays, held a course of lectures on true Christianity. Leaving the miraculous and supernatural part, he tried to demonstrate that Christ's moral teaching was perfect and based on communism, because Jesus and his disciples had everything in common among themselves and were not allowed to own anything in private—Apostles, chap. 2 and 3; that to reserve and keep for private use any portion of wealth was condemned, as shown in Ananias' case—Apostles, 5; the renouncement of accumulated wealth, and that the only true happiness consisted in loving one another—being one in soul and spirit.

Those lectures were very at-

tractive and well attended, being delivered by a forcible and eloquent orator. It is so easy to preach morality to others.

When the Icarians compared the theory with the practice; when they seen how far they were from the mark, they began to think, and like many others that are not Icarians are asking: "where are the Christians?"

Their recreations were also moral. Nothing was allowed that would have shocked the most scrupulous nature. All songs, poems or dramas exhibited on their stage were submitted to a commission, which did carefully eliminate all that could have a demoralizing influence.

All the exercises were in the French language. Many of the inhabitants of Nauvoo and vicinity though not understanding one word, attended (when invited) and enjoyed the performance. Dancing was also indulged in, but only by adults. Children were not allowed to take part.

The Icarians being convinced that Nauvoo was too narrow a field for their undertaking, the land too high in price for their means, and not

enough of it vacant to develop a large society, resolved in 1853 to send a commission to the western states to explore the country and select a site for the final establishment. The commission having explored Missouri and Iowa, reported favorably for Iowa, Adams county. The shores of the Nodaway river was the selected spot. They sent a corps of vigorous men with teams and wagons loaded with all the necessary implements to begin the establishment in the wilderness. Being the first settlers in that part of the country, they, under the homestead law, took possession of all the timber land. It was not exactly the best land for farming but the most valuable, as timber was scarce in that part of Iowa, being mostly rolling prairie land.

They homesteaded three or four thousand acres of land. They had room, a vast field for operation. They at once started the erecting of log houses and to break the soil. When the emigration began to settle around them the new settlers had to go to the Icarians for wood; it was a source of production.

Every year some members were

sent to reinforce the new establishment, but it worked slowly. The new settlers could not sustain themselves. They were constantly calling for aid from the mother colony that was not self sustaining, but had to be, by money brought by new comers or by the Icarian subscription from France.

The production in the new establishment was small. Money and provisions had to be forwarded to them often, and the society had to increase its debt which was large already. Cabet accompanied by two other members went over the plains in a buggy to examine the location. The new log house Metropole, was baptised by Cabet. Icaria was the name chosen.

In Nauvoo the situation was growing worse every day. The different categories of members was creating jealousy, discontentment. The primitive members had given, abandoned all they owned in the world. Others had been since admitted under the condition that half of what they owned when admitted would be restituted to them in case they would choose to retire. The former claimed that this condi-

tion was the cause of their want of activity, of interest. That if they had cut bridges and burnt their vessels behind them, having no means of leaving the society, they would try their best; they would root or die. A pressure was made to induce those members to renounce their privilege as detrimental to the welfare of the society. To put themselves on equal footing with the rest of the members, A few did it. Many refused, saying they were not fool enough to tie themselves and be at the mercy of others. Some were also suspected to have followed the example of Ananias (Apostles chapter v.) and kept a reserve fund for a case of emergency. Hard feelings prevailed.

In searching a remedy to the lack of production, some of the members conceived the idea of making a few changes in the organization. They proposed to keep an account of the production of each member and also of each shop. To create a sort of stimulant, a sort of competition, a little individualism; not to depend entirely on the consciousness of duty, that had proved deficient. Cabet was shocked at the proposi-

tion, claiming that individualism and communism were heterogenous: that the former would surely grow rapidly and destroy the later. He called a meeting of the general assembly as he had done before to every proposition that had not been elaborated by his own brain, stated the proposition and without any further discussion, compared the situation to that of a vessel at sea with two pilots on board—a young one and an old experienced one. The storm is strong; the sea high; the compass out of order; the reefs supposed to be near. The old pilot having more experience, tho the reefs can hardly be detected, knows they are near and prepares to turn to the right. The young pilot does not see them, advises to go straight on. The danger is imminent, the passengers not understanding the real situation, but fearing the danger, to whom do you suppose they'll confide the rudder? To the old experienced pilot, of course.

The old pilot, Cabet claimed supremacy and always refused to listen to any motion of reform to his perfect system.

Many losing confidence in the old pilot, left the society. They were and had been leaving as fast as they would come, so that in six years 1,800 persons came to it and we were never more than 500 together at the same time. When too strong opposition was made, Cabet would try his best to have the promoters leave.

"It is the quality we want and not the quantity. When a member of the body is mortifying, is it not better to sever the member than expose the whole body to perish? If two doctors are consulted, a young one and an old one, (the latter having had hundreds of such cases under his care and knowing the disastrous consequences of mortification) will you not take the advice of the old experienced one and have the member severed in time to save the whole body, instead of listening to the young doctor, who, in his ignorance, hopes to save both, not knowing the consequences of the disease?" Many will be called, but few will be elected.

So we went on, losing many of our most valuable members. The most courageous, industrious. As

soon as one showed discontent he was suspected of making calculations to leave and a sort of persecution was exerted. Life to him was made unendurable and the position untenable. He had to leave; instead of listening to their proposition and making a few concessions to induce them to stay—no, go they must.

Some of the young doctors (and they were many) thought and said the old one was mistaken in the nature of the disease; that instead of mortification it was paralysis—that instead of severing so many members, which weakened the body and made it helpless, an electric battery (under the form of a reform) should be applied; that it would stimulate those members and restore life over the whole body. They thought the old pilot was getting too old and was following a wrong route, which surely would bring the ship to wreck.

The prestige had vanished. Cabet had been too much in direct contact with his associates. They had discovered that he was fallible, and began to consider him as a man; Cabet feeling the opposition growing

every day, thought of strengthening his position. Having for counselors a few new members who flattered him and pretended to know how to compel men to work, to produce; they had been sly enough to work him up so that he thot himself the father of the new idea. In the spring of 1856 he came out with his famous proposition:

1. The president should be elected for four years.

2. Inspectors should be appointed by the direction to visit the different shops to report whether the members were fulfilling their duties. This proposition filled the measure. The idea to have inspectors, drones, aristocrats, that would spend time doing nothing and act as spies against their brothers. The opposition organized and the day of the election Cabet found himself face to face with a candidate for the presidency in opposition to him.

He never expected so much audacity and became raving mad. He kept the assembly three days together trying to influence the bashful, the old, the women by threatening to leave, to abandon them; showing the danger they were running

into. What would become of them if he, Cabet, were no more among them. Misery, anarchy and dissolution of the society would surely follow.

The children had lost respect and confidence in the father. The proposition was rejected and the ticket of the opposition was elected by a strong majority. One of the young pilots had been intrusted with the rudder.

Cabet and the members of the minority held long conferences together and it was resolved to resist the majority. Their first move was to refuse to work, but went regularly to the refractory to take their meals.

The majority gave them three days to resume work; to abide by the laws and submit to the majority or they would not be admitted to the dining hall.

Cabet advised his followers not to submit and the third day when they came to take their dinner, they found the doors closed. They took axes and split them open; a fight ensued; a mob; civil war. The majority held the fort and the minority was expelled from the hall. They

were notified that food would be furnished for women and children.

The next day the male members of the minority came to the kitchen with tin buckets to receive the promised food. When the distribution was completed they began to vociferate, to use abusive language, spilt the food on the ground, stuck the bread on the end of long poles they had brought for that purpose and marching and counter-marching paraded in front of the refectory. It was a disgusting sight. Cabet from the windows of his office encouraged them and laughed at their doings.

This stopped the distribution of food.

The inhabitants of Nauvoo held secret meetings, organizing and prepared to chase the boisterous communists as they had chased the Mormons before.

As the act of violences discontinued, the project was abandoned.

This is the time when I left the society, having lost confidence in both parties. We had come to Nauvoo to make a paradise on earth and we had made a sheol. I thot of searching for happiness elsewhere.

As the society was incorporated, Cabet made an appeal to the tribunals of the land for a dissolution of the society, but through a good attorney, lost his case. The verdict was, that he had to submit to the dictation of the majority.

Cabet, the legist, the reformator, the man of high intellect, gave the example of insubordination, of revolt, and had he an army at his disposal would have employed brutal force to crush what he called the rebels—formerly his best friends, mostly all the members of the former directions; men of talent, of ability, were against him.

The minority under his command began to move, carrying away all they possibly could. They did not meet with any opposition. The members of the majority had pity for them.

The Icarians had a valuable library. The minority wickedly took away a few volumes of each work, tearing the engravings in order to make them worthless.

They left Nauvoo in the fall of 1856 for St. Louis, where Cabet took sick and died during the winter. He was found one morning

frozen in his bed, the faithful having neglected to attend his last moments and to keep fire in his room.

Hanna, Hanna, Lama Sabatani! So ended the second Christ, the great reformator. Far from his country, from his family, cowardly abandoned by his disciples.

He had been a good man while in France. As an attorney he was always ready to take the defense of the weak, the oppressed, regardless of money. His intentions had been pure; of a high order. His will was strong, but he had a terrible nature and had undertaken a task beyond his faculties. He did all that was in his power to do good; but failed. He suffered much morally and caused others to suffer. I for one have no hard feelings against him and honor his memory, appreciating the intention. I blame the principles and not the man. The spirit was willing but the flesh was too strong.

After his death the faithful organized at Cheltenham, near St. Louis, Mo., under the direction of Mercadier and after much quarrelling, three years after dissolved.

In Nauvoo the emancipated children, the rebels, the revolutionists,

those who blamed Cabet for the unsuccessfulness of the experiment, the members of the majority, were now masters of the situation and believed earnestly that they were able to lead the ship to the harbor. They resolved to have a thorough liquidation of all debts in order to ascertain how they stood and then leave Nauvoo for the new establishment in Iowa. They began to send all the movable material they could load on wagons as there was no railroad yet connecting Nauvoo with that part of Iowa.

In the spring of 1854 they sold at auction all their real estate and personal property that was not worth transferring.

The proceeds of the sale did not prove sufficient to cover their debt and they had to mortgage their property in Iowa.

The liquidation showed clearly they owed as much as they owned; \$25,000 was the amount of the debt and the invoice did not produce very much more.

Six years of communistic life had left them deficient. They had not been even self-sustaining and had nothing to show for the money each

one brought and that subscribed in France, the amounts of which had been used to sustain life.

They honestly paid all their debts in Nauvoo and made their final departure in the fall of 1858.

The new colony was incorporated as an Agricultural Society under the statutes of the state of Iowa.

They closed the doors to emigration, not having lodging enough for new recruits.

The news of the dethronement of Cabet, of the civil war, amongst the Icarians had somewhat cooled the enthusiasm of the communists in France. The uncertainty of the existence of the colony under the new direction suddenly stopped the applications for membership. The Icarian subscription ceased also to replenish their treasury and the new colony was left entirely to itself for subsistence. Production, as usual, was small, but their timber—the sale of wood, was a source of wealth and helped them along. Quarreling kept on and fighting was sometimes resorted to.

They raised hogs and sheep. During the rebellion war, wool and all products in general, brought good

prices and enabled them to save money. During the Pikes Peak fever, being on the road, they kept a hotel and made enough money on the gold seekers to free 2,000 acres of land from mortgage and abandon the balance to the creditors.

Degree by degree a dissension had taken place and a systematical majority and minority were in existence. As over one-half of the members had left them since their departure from Nauvoo they were not very numerous. Between sixty to seventy. The new opposition, the minority, was composed mostly of young folks. Some of those children on whom rested our hopes for the future had become of age and entered the arena of active life. They proposed to have the incorporation act changed and not be confined to agriculture, but include industry in their sources of exploitation, reopen the doors to new members in order to develop the society and attract the attention of the outside world.

The majority, composed of old folks, opposed these views. They had renounced the hope of making a large society. They thought of

enjoying what they had and not risk to lose it. They were not willing to admit new members for fear of losing their majority and consequently the controlling power.

Emigration was covering the country around them with settlers. A railroad was built and a station established three miles from their settlement. Corning, the new station, was growing rapidly, and offered a good field for speculation. The Icarians were no speculators and they remained poor, while their neighbors were acquiring wealth rapidly. True to the principles the members of the majority refused to take part and engage in any speculation. They quarreled about it until it was too late. As there was no flour mill in the neighborhood they built one for their own use and afterward done custom work.

In 1872, four communards (who had taken an active part in the French commune in 1870 in Paris, had fled to New York to avoid prosecution,) applied to the Icarian colony for admittance, but were ordered not to come. Not having received the answer in time, they started and arrived in Corning to

the astonishment of the members of the community, who were not willing to admit them. The new comers having no means to go back, and understanding the reason why the majority was not willing to admit any one, used a stratagem and flattering both parties, pledged themselves secretly that when admitted, would be on their side. Both minority and majority believing in acquiring reinforcements, not only admitted them, but suspended in their favor the rule of provisory membership for six months and made them at once active members. As soon as admitted, they showed their colors and three of them joined the minority and one the majority. They began to have everybody understand that they were the men, the very ones that came in time to save the sinking ship; that they had the required qualifications and wisdom that had been lacking in all the others that had preceded them. They were good talkers and acquired a great influence. No one of the members could withstand their argumentation. The trouble was that one of them took place among the majority, understanding

fully that no two could get the directorship and as two of them were especially ambitious, it would equalize the chances. The conflict became more active, The production did not increase by their presence, but the difficulties; scenes of violence took place. The hope of the future; the children who had become men and women under the influence of communistic life, in consequence of the hereditary law, showed the same disposition as their parents. If there was any difference at all, it was a little deficiency, a little degeneration, a retrogradation. They never showed the talents, the skill, the activity, the ardor of their parents. They had inherited the vices, and communism had atrophied the good qualities.

Not producing enough, they had to suppress the use of coffee and tea and replace them by a decoction of strawberry leaves. The situation became very difficult. Fighting was often resorted to and the hope of the future showed as much disposition to it—maybe a little more than the old members.

The minority giving up the hope of inducing the majority to accede

to the request of development made a motion for a division of all properties in order to establish an automatic branch. It was refused, when they threatened to appeal before the courts of justice for a dissolution of partnership, as they were incorporated as a stock company.

Before taking any further steps, however, they consulted many of the old members (who had left the society long ago) asking advice as to what they should do. Majority and minority being mostly equal in number it was a difficult matter to be settled. All of those that were consulted, myself included, recommended an arbitration as the most civilized means, the most in accordance with their principles and the cheapest. We wrote to them that they would disgrace themselves to drag such an institution as theirs before the courts and give the lawyers a chance to milk their cow while they would be pulling her, one by the horns, the other by the tail.

Both sides asked for advice, but did not want any. All they were after was a confirmation of their doings. They had sunk down and

back to the fist right, to barbarism, and were not able to listen to sound counsel. The majority offered the minority a sum of money if they would consent to leave and experiment anywhere else. No, they wanted their integral share—no more, no less—and they attacked the society in dissolution on the ground that they had not complied with their charter.

The society was dissolved by the law and trustees appointed to divide the real estate and personal property among all the stockholders, according to the length of time they had contributed to the production of said property. As soon as dissolved they reorganized as two different societies, called “the young branch” and “the old branch.”

The property was of such a nature that it was difficult to divide it at once. The houses were all built on one spot. Some had to be moved away. The members of both branches had become bitter enemies, and during the division of property, coming in contact too closely, pugilism was often the result. One day they had a regular fight about an

old water-trough, which was not worth fifty cents. They both claimed it and a regular and desperate combat took place. Many heroes were called to bite the dust. No one died but a few were severely injured; an attempt of castration was performed on one of the communards.

They had a vineyard and had made several hundred gallons of wine. The wine brought another contest in which men and women engaged in the struggle. I can not and will not relate all the lamentable instances of vandalism that occurred. They also on each side published a paper in which they abused each other in the most shocking manner.

The new society, the young branch composed of the members of the minority, was deserted year after year by all its members to the exception of two, who had been sharp enough to manage to remain in possession of the Icarian patrimony and enjoy the fruits of 35 years of labor of hundreds des-illusioned communists.

So ended the experiment of communistic life in Nanvoo, under the

leadership of the founder, E. Cabet; in six years they arrived at civil war and division. In Iowa without Cabet, in sixteen years the same result was attained.

Communism does not agree with human nature. It is detrimental to that nature. The physical condition of the human being is of such an order that it is not adaptable to communism and consequently the result can not be satisfactory.

For those who should still remain under the impression that this experiment is not authority enough to be conclusive proof for the non-practicability of communism, is in my opinion merely an assertion.

It is said and admitted by many that communism does not agree with human nature. Others pretend that with a firm will and the necessary qualities it could be put into practice. There lies the question. The qualifications and the will. It is easily pronounced but very difficult to explain and understand. Why is it that having the will, and believing to be qualified, did these Icarians fail. Some of them say that if we had good communists it could be practiced. Every

one of them who left the society, had said of those who had left before himself, "they are not good communists." Those that are members now of the Icarian society are pronounced by all those who have left it poor communists.

Where are the good ones?

Every one of them believes he has done all that could humanly be done and that he has done better than all the others. That if others had been as good as he was and done as well as he did all would have gone right, and still it went wrong. Human nature agrees not with communism. Why? Are we not free agents? Can't we act as we will? Can't we think as we will? What is that human nature that does not agree? What is our ego, our entity, the will, the qualifications?

So few understood themselves. The work of this wonderful, complicated machine called the human body; that they must be excused when they talk communism, and anarchism. Communism admits of government. Anarchism does not. Both and the latter still more than the former mode of society requires a degree of perfection, a condition

that is not contained in the human body at present.

That human being undertakes to practice communism; which requires perfection, and abnegation of one's self, admitting that the judgement, the cerebrum would have conceived and understood that state of perfection and would be willing to impose silence to all its human co-associates, the organs. They protest, rebel, and show him that they have something to say in the management of this transaction, and if such a state of things would be a satisfaction, a gratification for the head, it would not be for them, and the war keeps on until the head is subdued and communism a failure.

What human nature will be in the future I do not know. In its present state it is too imperfect, and in order to keep it in its present developed state, it takes the rubbing, sharpening influence of suffering, of difficulties to overcome, of self responsibility, of ambition, which communistic life does not offer, and is consequently detrimental to that nature.

